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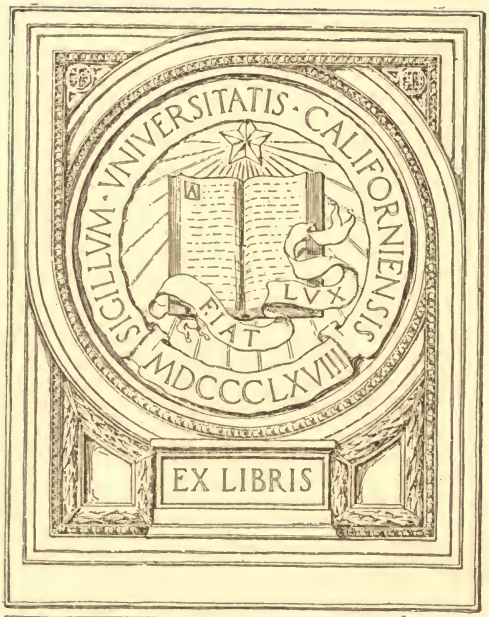
THE NEW DAY

SCUDDER MIDDLETON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THE NEW DAY

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MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

THE NEW DAY

BY

SCUDDER MIDDLETON

AUTHOR OF "STREETS AND FACES"

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1919

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Set up and electrotyped. Published March, 1919.

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To W. A. B.

I have not very much to show
For all the songs I planned,
For much was lost between the heart
And my uncertain hand.

But take the gift and add to it
A beauty that endures:
The love that I could not express,
But which you know is yours.

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The author acknowledges the courtesy of the Editors of *The Yale Review, The Nation, The Bellman, The Dial, The Boston Transcript, The Bookman, Poetry* (Chicago), *Contemporary Verse, The Madrigal,* and *The Little Book Publisher* in granting permission to reprint the poems which first appeared in these publications.

1919

I

Now they are watching us from
cloud and wave.
Out of the wind and sunbeam, from
the dust —
The love, the strength, the beauty
that they gave
Are pleading with our hearts to keep
the trust.
Shall we shout loud and wave the
battle-flag,
Be thoughtless in the time of peace
and let
The old, black drums of War still
call and brag
Throughout the land? Shall we so
soon forget

The grace of flesh, the dancer in the brain,
Audacities and dreams and all the truth
Of speech and laughter that the crimson rain
Shattered and took away from lovely Youth?
Shall we conceal this shame of War by pride,
Remembering not the things for which they died?

II

Long held content within your sea-girt home,
America, you child of work and mirth,
Now you have snapped the ancient bars to roam,
A giant stripling, over all the earth.
Now all the glittering earth is yours to hold:

The million-handed engines and the stone
Piled Babel-wise and all the noisy gold,
The proudest ships the world has ever known.
O child, beware of your heroic part—
The low satanic voice is in your ears.
Look long and deep into that giant heart,
For what you do will make the waiting years!
Not in defeat but in the hour of might
Comes on the test that reads the soul aright.

III

Not now, the new Atlantis of our dream,
But soon — dear, tired people everywhere!
The sun has pierced the smoke: the plow will gleam,

The grain will climb again upon the air.
The honest days will bring the work that heals
Back to the village and the streets of stone.
There will be sweeter music from the wheels,
For hands that make will be the hands that own.
Lead on, brave spirits! Not until we fight
The battle of the mind will life be wise.
Until we are no more afraid of light,
We cannot bring our Heaven from the skies.
O I have heard the clear, new bugles blow
Over the English lanes and Russian snow!

THE LOST SINGER

In the olive Orient,
Up and down Jerusalem streets
He sang his poems.

She who lived in Magdala,
Fishermen of Galilee,
Blind and poor from Jericho,
Lepers out of Bethany,
Children, scholars, thieves —
What a motley crew
Loved the singing Jew!

Now the bayonet is there,
And the gun —
Maybe on the very corner where
they met.
And the sun

Looks down upon the smoke.
Saladin is in the dust,
Richard camps on Olivet.

Where are halo, thorn and staff,
That cloak like Himalayan snow?

THE POETS

We need you now, strong guardians
of our hearts,
Now, when a darkness lies on sea
and land,
When we of weakening faith forget
our parts
And bow before the falling of the
sand.
Be with us now or we betray our
trust
And say, "There is no wisdom but
in death" —
Remembering lovely eyes now closed
with dust —
"There is no beauty that outlasts
the breath."
For we are growing blind and can-
not see

Beyond the clouds that stand like prison-bars,
The changeless regions of our empery,
Where once we moved in friendship with the stars.
O children of the light, now in our grief
Give us again the solace of belief.

THE LAST ENEMY

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death."

If alien planets, in their secret ways,
Discover us through new philosophies
In which all we hold dear is only dross
In some inscrutable design of time:
Our love, the echo in an empty house,
Our strength, the ashes on the aimless wind.
If there are other values than we know,
Then maybe Death is very kind and wise.

But all our joy comes out of measured hours.

We prize the human tear above the
star,
The voice that calls our name above
the dream,
The certain kiss above the hidden
law.
The earth we see grows up within
our breasts
And blooms and hangs the fruit
around our hearts.
Death is the great indignity of life,
The hand that steals our world
and makes us blind.

THE RETURN

JUST as a mother long ago
Held her sweet child at last, so we
Hold Life again within our arms
And lean to kiss him tenderly.

Life has come back into our hearts.
To us who bound the brow of Death
With too much laurel and who praised
Too much the going out of breath —
He has come back!

O we shall hold him safely now,
Poor hungry child upon whose head
Was laid the whip, to whom war gave
The bullet and the sword for bread.

He has come back!
Now we shall keep him in our hearts

And heal him by the music there.
We shall give War the truthful
name
And snatch the roses from his hair.

We shall make songs and cities now,
Chart skies and tame the eastern
fire,
And build an earthly Paradise
For him by engines of desire.

MY SONGS

I HAVE made these songs for you, star-eyes.
Sing them again when the brave, young Spring
Walks through the streets we two have known,
When the purple grackle builds in the Park
And the pansies in Union Square are blown.
Hide them away for the tired day
When you go with the crowd through steel and stone,
Aware that out in the fields of God
The work of the conquering sun is done,
The fruit is at last on the weary tree

And the clouds are bringing the heroes home
Into the red Valhalla west.

Sing them again and think of me!

WISDOM

A WISE man holds himself in check,
But fools and poets run ahead.
One must be credulous or sit
Forever with the living dead.

The wise man shuts his door at night
And pulls the bolts and drops the bars.
One must go trustful through the dark
To earn the friendship of the stars.

ROMANCE

Why should we argue with the falling dust
Or tremble in the traffic of the days?
Our hearts are music makers in the clouds,
Our feet are running on the heavenly ways.

We'll go and find the honey of romance
Within the hollow of the sacred tree.
There is a spirit in the eastern sky,
Calling along the dawn to you and me.

She'll lead us to the forest where she hides

The yellow wine that keeps the angels young —
We are the chosen lovers of the earth
For whom alone the golden comb was hung.

THE PRISONERS

SHE came among us and we lived.
As unassuming as the day
That seeks no boon or token,
She came her elemental way
And healed us who were broken.

The faith that we had put aside
In years when we were master men,
Returned with her like flowers
The knowing spring lures back again
To help the tired hours.

So we began to see and know.
She brought the light and taught
the truth
To us poor fools of duty.
It was her unimpeded youth
That filled our lives with beauty.

They saw no change when she had
gone.
But we, who seemed so very old,
Had snapped our chains to follow
Her face, that was the rainbow's
gold,
Her heart, that was the swallow.

BONDS

I WAS an aimless wave
In the center of a sea.
You drew me up
By the sun within your eyes.
You made me strong and wise,
Gave me back to earth again
Like the providential rain.

Trees in the wind,
Birds on the nest,
And the tiny ants
In the jungle of the grass —
I am linked by your hand
To seed and song and work.

THE SERVANT

Consider me as one who bears
The precious gifts another sends —
A servant such as Abraham
Sent down among his tribal friends.

The songs I wind around your name,
The joy I hold and must not hide,
Are like the spangles and the gold
The servant brought to Isaac's bride.

You are that simple child to me —
The kindly girl of Israel
Who gave a servant once to drink
At eve beside the Nahor well.

EXILE

YOUR eyes are brave.
This is no place for you —
Beneath the shuddering arms of the pine.
Youth has its own Gethsemane
Out there on the open road.

I am hiding here a while
Until my enemy, the sun, is dead.
But you are white and red,
To you he will be friend.
He will take your body in his hands
And lift you up, star-high,
Against his kiss.

CARNIVAL

Why do you go before the maple leaves
Open, like little hands, to welcome spring?
O lovely woman, is your heart afraid
Of all the truths the trees of April bring?

Just when the carnival begins, you go.
Alone I watch the dancing of the earth.
Though you may raise the cloak before your face,
You cannot hide the meaning of this mirth.

SURRENDER

O I AM weary of the old pretense!
Take me at last — I throw away
the pride
That covered up the burning June
in me.
I have unlocked the gates and decked
the walls
And hung the restless banners on
the wind.
Hear the sweet bells ringing in my
blood,
Calling you home, my traveler from
the sun!

THE JOURNEY

What matter where the Apple grows?
True heroes never count the miles.
The journey leads to where it leads —
Sargasso or the Western Isles.

No one place holds the dreams of all.
Earth wears a multi-colored robe,
And there are new Hesperides
In every corner of the globe.

Some find the fruit like Hercules —
For such the moon and sun may stop;
Yet never doubt that Sisyphus
Achieved at last the mountain top.

AROPHE

I

THERE was a girl in Arophe
When Helen launched her thousand
ships,
Whose body had the grace of day
With dawn forever at her lips.

When all the Ilium towers fell,
There was a boy who heard the
spring
Calling across the asphodel
For lonely lads to love and sing.

Fire and gold and ivory moon,
The music of the breath and blood,
Were mingled in the gloam of June
When Grecian lilacs came to bud.

You covered it all, impartial
Time,
But you give again when you take
away.
It is I who follow the deathless
girl,
Come up from the dust of Arophe.

II

There was a house that loved the
morning,
Where now only the spring wind
grieves.
I shall not wake again beside you
And hear the sparrows in the eaves.

I shall not reach again
For budding boughs above you
To draw the valorous blossom to
your lips.
Never again we two shall wander
The sea-blown road to the harbor
ships.

The swift, white city makes a thunder
Under my window night and day.
I cannot follow your magic finger
Over the roofs to Arophe.

SEA WISDOM

She'll come again with her incomparable smile,
And I'll not be afraid
The winds that brought Ulysses home
Have blown away the mists that lay
Between her eyes and mine.

There'll be no silence when she calls my name,
For I have learned at last to speak.
The waves that taught Demosthenes
Have made my song as free and strong
As her unfaltering speech.

THE HEAVENLY INTRIGUE

As he who catches, in passing,
A glimpse of himself in a mirror,
Suddenly becomes aware of a being
Detached from the scheme of the moment,
So we two, in each other's arms,
At a time of wonder and silence,
Saw, for a flash, our figures
Move and blend in the heavenly intrigue —
Not as the King and the Queen of creation,
But as the foolish deluded builders,
Rearing impossible towers and singing
Under the whip of an absolute master.

HATE

Her ways were full of quiet cruelties,
Perfected as the poet carves the song.
Drawn to her by the unacknowledged blood,
And crushed beneath the hammers of her eyes,
He knew the law and range of her desire.

Her lust moved like a spider in a mesh
Hung up to catch and hold the desperate wings.
She spun the web to satisfy a need,
To wreck and level all aspiring things.

THE BIRD

Let the homing caravans
Bring their treasures to the sea —
I have heard the deathless bird
On the sole Arabian tree.

Like a cup of scarlet wine
Flung upon the desert sands,
Like a flaming arrow shot
Over multicolored lands,

Flows and burns the magic song
From the solitary bough,
While the dusts of kingdoms fall
On Mohammed's tranquil brow.

Let the little human band
Go its way to love and death —
I have found the certain thing
In this melody of breath.

I can never leave this bird!
He is like the soul in me,
Singing there between the stars
And the tents of Araby.

INTERLUDE

I AM not old, but old enough
To know that you are very young.
It might be said I am the leaf,
And you the blossom newly sprung.

So I shall grow a while with you,
And hear the bee and watch the
cloud,
Before the dragon on the branch,
The caterpillar, weaves a shroud.

SPRING

Out of the rain,
A girl with hair blown wild before
her,
A girl,
Shy and reluctant,
Trembling as she leans against the
wind —
Dawn and death are like her.

Angel and mother by her eyes,
Demon and wanton by her smile —
I know her well.

I was her lover.
Long ago I caught and held her
Just when the willow yellowed
And the water learned to speak.
Slowly she comes again to keep the
tryst.

TYRE

Bright iron, cassia and calamus,
Lambs and rams and goats,
Floating out of Tyre
In the ships of Tarshish —
In the caravans of pine and cedar,
With the men of Arvad,
With the youth of Zidon,
Singing on the oars.

THE SUN

"... he marches on destroying as well as building ... Every dawn slaughters the innocent."

THE little clock is counting
The footsteps of the sun.
O he will surely find us
Before our work is done!

Before we're through with planning,
Before our loves are said,
He'll come with bolt and banner,
Dressed up in eastern red.

He'll tear the moon from heaven
And blind the hopeful stars,
And music will be shattered
By the thunder of his cars.

Like flame he'll leap before us;
He'll hurl his burning darts,

And throw a net of fire
Around our helpless hearts.

Then fools will start their weeping,
The strong will fight for breath,
And some will give their bodies,
Like Jesus Christ, to death.

But he will surely find us!
Concerned with things to be,
He will not hear nor heed us,
Who live so presently.

The little clock is counting:
He marches on in haste,
Who daily dreams creation
And lays creation waste.

FINIS

I NEEDED you —
Now that is gone.
I cared for you —
Now that is song.
What am I to you,
What are you to me,
Though we lived so utterly? . . .
Two gibbering gulls that pass at night
Bound for lone aëries underneath the stars.

THE GIRL

I

That house in which you lived
was not your home,
For home's a place where there are
faith and love.
Two poor tragedians stalked along
those halls,
Betrayed by passion and denied by
hope.
They hated you whose beauty
brought to mind
The early magic of their common
life.
But in your own wise heart you made
a home
Where you put secret things like
hills and heaven.

You had the independence of the rose,
The bravery of sunlight on the grave.

II

Often you came to the room of many books.
There, upon the floor, under the open window,
You would sit, a young Athena —
The dreams and wisdom of the world around you.
As you read,
The wind, blowing across the honeysuckle,
Played with a ruffle on your dress.

Then you never heard the laughter of the boys
On their way to Tanner's Pool,
Nor the gossip of the trees in the garden.
You had climbed the slender ladders
That lean against the clouds,

You were running in the meadows
of the sky.

III

With mottled stones and shoots
of yellow willow
You built an altar by the stream
Back of the great white house.
You, who were friendly with the
flowers
And understood the ways of stars
and birds,
Made with your own hands
A thing of beauty.

There you went when the story
ended;
When the sun crept under the hill;
When the people of the house were
cruel.

You took the violets that grew
along the fence
And twined a garland for your secret
temple.

IV

She was a mother to your hidden self —
A wistful, wrinkled woman who kept young
By watching you and listening to your talk.
How she loved you!
You were the light that made the journey sure.

You never knew the pain beneath her smile
That day you brought the nest of robins home.
"Little children of the birds" — you called them.
You wondered why she turned and walked away.

V

The seed is carried by desolate winds
Blowing down from the autumn night,
While the trees bend close and mutter

Like tired wives confiding
The terrible truths of birth.

VI

Once when the snow covered the garden,
You heard a voice that called your name
Over and over,
Mixed with the sound of the world outside.

Then you left the fire in the grate,
The story-book and the water-colored beads.
In your room, alone,
You hid your face in the pillow.
You could not stop those tears that burned your eyes,
Those sobs that shook the bed.

Outside the storm ended.
The sun came and the snow on the roof melted.

A blue-bird paused on the garden
tree.

When they found you later,
You were fast asleep —
A child no longer.

TO THE MOON

QUESTIONING you come
Sibyl-like out of the darkened ocean,
Trailing your argent hair
Across the broken water.

Wanderer,
Take me into your cool bosom
And make me a part of you.
Lay your soft hands of light over
my eyes
And mix me with your memories.

Tender vestal of the night,
Give me your heavenly gift of peace.

DREAM-ROVER

Kiss me and ask no more!
I cannot stay. I am the dust that
drifts,
Falling at last when all winds cease
Upon a flower in a secret place,
Upon the fire of a lovely face.

Kiss me and let me go!
I am dream-rover, drawn by cloudy
eyes
Of one who strokes a dulcimer,
Waiting forever strange and wan
Beneath the pleasure dome of Kubla
Khan.

IMAGE

You the warm, the beautiful, the
real
I can pass by in pride, with bravery:
So many ways there are to kill a
glance,
It is so easy to be strong with
words.

But you the walker in my mental
world,
You the intangible, the invisible
thought,
You the inscrutable, I cannot pass —
You crush me at your breast and
let me fall.

It is not you — it is an image of
you,

Moving like light and shadow in my
brain,
Through every secret history of my
mind,
That tortures me, that mocks my
brave pretense.

A POET

The fingers of the lovely dead
Were laid across his burning eyes,
And when he walked in Soho Square
He saw the Lesbian in the skies.

Whitechapel hummed its dirge of hours,
In streets the men and dogs were lean.
While little children played with sin,
He watched the face of red Faustine.

War brewed a poison for the world,
But blind and unaware he wrote: —
"The Spring comes on in Calydon,
From Kios Phaon rows his boat."

FEAR

I

I NEEDED you
As a white ship needs
The breath of a cloud —
Now I am drifting, drawn by the
subtle tides.
Come down out of the sky,
Compassionate wind!
I hear the waves running on
the shore.

II

I cared for you
As a bright bird cares
For a light in the East —
Now I am songless, lost in the
darkened wood.

Lift your shining lamp,
Unconquerable dawn!
I hear the wings of the terrible
hawk.

THE EMPTY ROOM

It never can happen again —
Here, in this beautiful place,
Or beyond the gray dust of the tomb.
I will take the daisy and sorrel,
The late star-weed and the laurel,
And the fatal poppy of coral
Into my empty room.

And I shall be quiet again,
Watched over by myriad eyes
That teach the old way of the years.
For I know that life to the flower
Is kind enough in its hour,
And Death himself gives it dower,
Richer than first appears.

TO AN OLD COUPLE

Wait a little while —
Death will answer to your nodding;
Like a friend he will come and find
you,
Take you both and fold you from the
sun.

Two old, tired people!
What does it matter to you now
That no one thing was completed,
Not even a single task set the early
heart,
Achieved in fulness?

Bow on your mute assents to life!
The years unravel the designs of
youth,
Yet time brings at the last
The serene illusion of accomplish-
ment.

When your two wrinkled hands meet
in the night —
You know that all is well.

Wait awhile —
The door will open.

INQUISITORS

We dream the impossible dream —
We see behind the beauty of the star,
We hear beyond the voice in the wind,
We feel beneath the kiss on our lips —
For us there shall be no rest.

We, the unsatisfied,
Ruthless inquisitors,
Pleading with life —
We are crusaders without a Jerusalem,
Pilgrims for whom there can be no shrine.

CHILDREN

I

Heavy are the raindrops falling from
the eaves.
I awake in the dark and hear them,
After the storm is over:
Drip, drip, drip —
On the wooden walk below.
Louder than the howl of the running
storm
Are the little voices of forgotten rain.
Though I cover my ears,
The blood through my veins keeps time
To the certain, fatal falling —
Dead! Dead! Dead!

II

She stood above me in the narrow
hallway.

Looking up I saw and knew her:
Young Rossetti's Damozel,
Leaning on the golden stair-rail,
Yellow country daisies in her hand.
Up there, too, I knew was heaven —
Not the kind, perhaps, God rules in,
Giving stars to hopeless lovers,
But a little four-walled heaven,
Looking out on city pavements
Where the angels rarely walked.

III

Eve, my belovéd Eve,
Be not afraid!
My arms are around you;
He cannot find us here.
Let His flaming Cherubim wield their
fiery swords —
They guard an empty garden now.

Eve, Eve, my belovéd Eve,
Lift up your face and look at me . . . .
Ah, you are lovelier now
Than when I saw you first

Beside the red Euphrates in the dawn!
Do you remember? —
We were two children and we knew not
what we did.

Eve, my belovéd Eve,
Weep not for those forbidding years;
Take me again upon your breast —
A wiser Paradise is in our kiss!

O pain and pleasure of the Fruit!

IV

I shut the door on the shaking
street.
The hall was silent and dark.
Then up two flights of stairs —
Slowly, wearily, with heavy feet.
I thought of the times I had heard
my name,
There on that narrow stair-way —
But now she did not call.
She lay on a cot;
Her eyes were wet and she stirred,
Restless in pain.

On the wall the yellow gas-flame flickered;
It filled the room with ghostly shadows —
A mockery of the sun that had loved her windows.
Her clothes lay on the chair beside her,
Huddled, pathetic — white things like herself.
The doctor spoke —
I remember only the whisky upon his breath,
Then his step on the stair
And the shameless voice of the city
As he opened the outer door.
Then silence, pitiless silence. . . .
Two poor children, ignorant, bewildered, baffled, beaten —
Alone in silence. . . .
Only the hiss of the yellow gas-flame
And the creak of the wooden cot.

V

Outside in the barn the horses are moving;
Restlessly they stamp on the floor of their stalls.

(Knock, knock, knock —
Will the door ever open?)

O creatures out there in the dark,
Are you, too, aware of the treacherous night,
The calm, deceitful night that is planning,
Forever scheming behind the mask of moon and stars?

(Knock, knock, knock —
Will the door ever open?)

Poor, helpless beasts are we that know,
Yet do not understand!

MYSTERY

If a star can grow
On a blade of grass,
If a rose can climb
Like a Romeo,
And a river flow
Through a granite wall —
Maybe a human heart,
Broken within a breast,
Can heal again
In the simple rain,
When a man is laid to rest.

CHANGE

Mad winds blow over the earth
Soft rain slips down from the cloud:
The leaf and the bud arise
And follow the sun.
After it all, the seed,
The searching root,
Darkness —
And the slow beginning again.

Pain swings open the gates of life:
The wondering traveler enters in.
The new Madonna smiles through her tears
And draws young April up to her breast.
After it all, the babe,
The adventurous flesh,
The pilgrim mind,
Silence —
And the journey over again.

TWILIGHT

At the hour of silhouettes
In a city of beautiful towers,
We who were slave and slavey
Walked through the purple streets,
And the balm and the color of twilight
Were motherly hands that touched us,
Were magical hands that soothed us
As we moved in the granite aisles.

Then you who had never been happy
And I who would never be free
Felt the infinite truth of that pity,
Sky-given to you and to me.
For the wheels and the lamps of the city

Were terrible hands that found us,
Were merciless hands that crushed
us
As we walked in the granite aisles.

FOR ELAINE

Go back, go back to Camelot!
The night-hawks hide the broken
moon.
The wolves are running in the road,
And blood is on the dragon's tooth.
Go back, go back — the worldly
truth
Is far too much for human eyes!
Go back, go back to Camelot,
And take your gilded mirror up:
Your little hand shall hold the
shield
Against the madness of the world.

BURIAL

She is a seed that will grow again
Out of the quiet night of the grave.
Cover her over with the warm, sweet earth —
She was one of the things the wild earth gave.

When the bushes burn on the Palisades
And the green fire creeps across the place,
Go, follow the flight of the yellow bees
If you would look at her lovely face.

Under the reverential trees
She keeps the promise of earthly days,

Ever returning with the flame and
song —
Persephone, back through the violet
ways.

HARVEST

Because to-morrow we shall lie
Unknowing with the yearly slain,
We walk to-day away from men
And look across the ripened grain.

Our love and journey were like
this:
Out of the old, conspiring earth
We rose and struggled to the sky,
Forever restless from our birth.

Creeping on air we felt the sun,
Storm-bent, the fellowship of tears.
Though we were prisoners of clay,
Our minds went out like pioneers.

Only the human hand I hold,
Only the face that you can see —
These are all that we have found.
Bind us together, tenderly!

THE STRANGER

Isaac has his bride.
Standing in the bowing corn,
He saw her coming on the yellow
camel.

Now his house is bright with many
lamps.
The marriage feast is spread —
Wine and jewels and colored linen
Shine upon the table.

Empty are the jars.
The friends have all departed —
Lower burn the lamps upon the wall.
Through the window, over young
Rebecca,
Shines the morning star.

Go, imperious bridegroom,
Sit beside her for a while in silence —
She is still the stranger in your
house.

TAMARA

In Tamara we two were glad.
I wove the silken water grass
That lifts a blossom in the Spring.
In Tamara you sat and sang
All day in worship of the wing,
The sun, the river and the seed —
All day I heard you plead.

In Tamara the night laid lips
Upon the brow of man and maid,
And all that each had lost or missed
Came back again with evening shade.
How beautiful we were to God!
How happy we were then!
In Tamara our bodies lay,
But we were where the fountains play,
Beyond the gates of men.

Then came the warriors of the West,
And day and night were filled with pain.
Day and night the shining rain
Of their bright spears sought out the breast
Of man and maid and babe
In Tamara,
In Tamara, the land of peace,
Where you and I were glad.

Before the foaming warrior horse
We fled the hills of our delight,
By shameless day and shameful night.
Beyond the smoke, beyond the flame,
Into this land that has no name,
Into this wilderness we came,
Away from Tamara.

O take my hand! O hold my hand!
The black clouds want our hearts,
And there are serpents at our feet
With whips and fatal darts.

Terrible fruits upon the boughs
Hang down to tempt our lips,
Our mouths that knew the honey pear,
And crushed the grapes that glittered there,
Like eyes, in Tamara.

The lizard and the beetle crawl
Upon the ruined sand.
Beyond the jagged mountain wall,
The white face and the star go down
Into the ebon land
That once was Tamara.

The vulture and the wingéd rat
Fly low to watch us now.
The wild dog and the sabred cat
Wait for the weaver and the bird,
Who wove the silken water grass,
Who sang beside the tidal glass
Awhile in Tamara.

A TRUTH

Though you must turn aside your lovely head
And lift the hand so gently pressed on mine,
You are not lost to me. I love you, dear,
Not half so much for these as for the faith
Your spirit taught, far better than your lips.
Now I can look and find you everywhere.
The blossomy bough, so bare a while ago,
The blade that thrusts aside the heavy stone,
The ragged play-girl dancing in the park,
Brave laughter ringing at the end of day

From dingy rooms above laborious
streets —
By these I feel you near me and I
know
You have not gone away. Beside
me still
Your beauty builds and teaches
as it sings —
You are a truth, dear, deep in the
heart of things.

NIGHT

I WALK along the yellow hours
And find you at the end,
Marvelous mother of the stars.

In the intimate silence of your love,
When you rock the earth like a tired child
And fold the leaves and the feathered wings —
Remember me.

Gather me to your breast, womanly night!
I am the babe who grew
In the dark beneath your heart
When the world was new.

FOR AN EARTHLY ANGEL

You are very beautiful to me:
I shall go where you go
Through the mazy day,
Reaching up for high fruit,
Leaning down for ground buds,
Spreading tents at twilight
Where you can rest and pray.

Every man must follow some light,
Dream beams or little flames
Burning in the eyes —
I shall go where you go.
It is quite enough to know
How an earthly angel lives,
What she needs and what she gives
To the earth-imprisoned things.

Being very beautiful to me,
I shall follow you and learn
What I could not half discern,
If alone I went my way
Through the mazy day.

THE SECRET OF JOHN DOE

I DO the task for little coins,
I rise and eat and lay me down.
I am the undistinguished slave,
Like millions of this dusty town.

No one would guess that I have seen
Young Jesus on the burning cross
That shines electric on the Square
And turns the golden stars to dross.

No one would guess that once I walked
With slim Diana of the Tower,
And searched the crannies of the paves,
And found, with her, the hidden flower.

They can not know that I have sat
With Edgar Poe till dawn came up,
And heard him weep for his Lenore,
And seen the raven on his cup.

No one would say, to look at me,
That once I loved a woman here,
Or that this clerk, tied down to
books,
Could touch the lips of Guinevere.

I do my daily work for coins,
I wake and eat and lay me down —
Yet I have been the man who lives,
A poet in this dingy town.

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